



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: House Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: April 28, 2026
Re: School Air Quality
Testimony in **Support of H 7582** (Cotter, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of H 7582, legislation that establishes a statewide framework for monitoring and improving indoor air quality in Rhode Island's public schools.

Indoor air quality is a critical component of safe and healthy learning environments. Students and educators spend much of their day inside school buildings, and the quality of the air they breathe directly affects respiratory health, concentration, and overall well-being. Poor ventilation and filtration can allow harmful particulates and pollutants to accumulate, increasing the risk of illness and negatively affecting learning conditions.

H 7582 takes an important step toward ensuring that Rhode Island schools meet modern, science-based standards for indoor air quality. By directing the Department of Health to establish guidelines for environmental conditions—including temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide, particulate matter, ventilation, and filtration—the legislation creates clear statewide expectations for healthy school environments. The bill also integrates indoor air quality assessments into the state's school facilities needs survey, ensuring consistent evaluation of building conditions.

Regular inspections and public reporting will provide districts and the state with reliable data to guide capital planning and maintenance decisions. In addition, the bill's enhanced school housing aid reimbursement for indoor air quality improvements creates a meaningful incentive to invest in necessary upgrades to school facilities.

For educators and school staff, air quality is a daily workplace condition. For students, it is a matter of health and academic success. Ensuring that school buildings provide clean, well-ventilated air is a practical and necessary investment in student learning and public health.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H 7582.

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